

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

In the Specification:

Please **AMEND** the specification as shown in the following marked up paragraph, which shows changes made relative to the immediate prior version.

Please **REPLACE** the paragraph at page 9, lines 16-23 with the following paragraph:

The cooling step in the expansion process results in some relatively ~~minor~~ minor shrinkage on the order of less than about 5% and generally in the range of from about 2% to about 3%. This shrinkage must be accounted for in the production of near net shape performs or final products of specific dimensions and is readily determinable through trial and error with the particular coal starting material being used. The shrinkage may be further minimized by the addition of some inert solid material such as coke particles, ceramic particles, ground waste from the coal expansion process etc. as is common practice in ceramic fabrication.